



Going-to-the Sun Road News

New Visitor Services at Glacier

In an effort to enhance the visitor experience during a trip to Glacier National Park, construction is well underway on a transit center near Apgar Village, about one mile beyond the park's west entrance. The Apgar Transit Center will provide visitors with basic information on visiting the park and will be the hub for the new free visitor shuttle bus service. Information displays and interactive computer kiosks will provide up-to-date information on conditions along the Going-to-the-Sun Road and the optional free shuttle service. Volunteer staff will be on hand for transit-related questions.

The Apgar Transit Center is designed in an environmentally-friendly fashion that will result in energy efficiency and minimal environmental impacts. Native plants, trees and soils from the building site will be reused as part of the construction process.

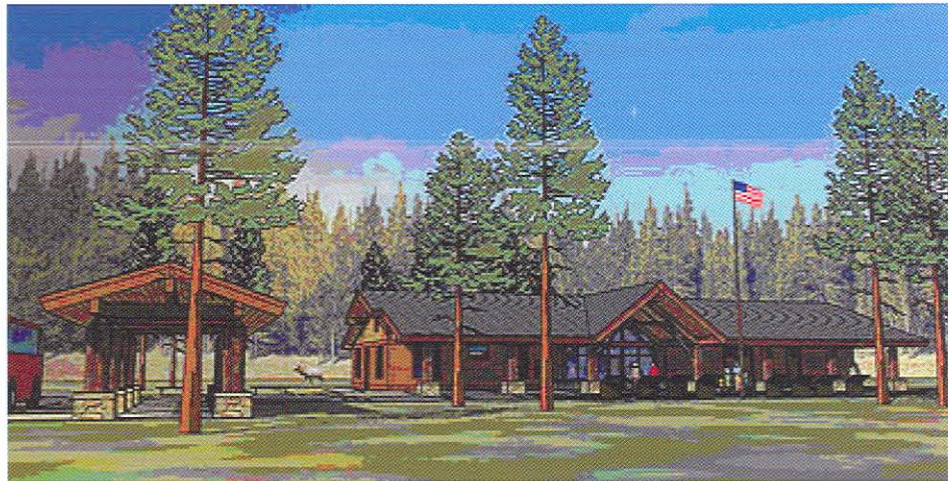
Starting in July 2007, park visitors will be able to access many destinations along Going-to-the-Sun Road while enjoying the spectacular scenery by riding on one of the park's new optional and environmentally-friendly passenger shuttle buses. Once park entrance fees are paid there will be no additional charge to ride the shuttle, no tickets will be required, and transit stops will be clearly marked along the Going-to-the-Sun Road. The shuttle system offers a travel option for sightseers and hikers alike to avoid traffic and parking problems associated with rehabilitation of the Going-to-the-Sun Road.

The transit system will provide two-way service along Going-to-the-Sun Road between the Apgar Transit Center and St. Mary Visitor Center. This year, buses will run every 15 or 30 minutes dependent on location and time of day from July 1 through Labor Day weekend. Visitors will be able to access a wide range of information at the Apgar Transit Center and St. Mary Visitor Center (available in 2008) to assist in learning about the full range of options available to enjoy the park.

Once visitors have reached their destinations, re-boarding other buses along the route will be easy; just a brief wait at one of the shuttle stops. The stops will feature interpretive and educational information regarding the history and features of the park. The park is planning to use the first year of operation as a learning year and will observe the transit operation and collect information on how best to improve the system between seasons. It is anticipated that this new experience will

offer a great opportunity to many visitors but it will likely need several years to determine the best way to best serve the unique needs of Glacier's various visitors.

Bus schedules will be posted at each shuttle stop, at each informational kiosk, at visitor centers, and will be viewable on-line at the park's website. For additional information on these new visitor services visit the park's website at <http://www.nps.gov/glac>.



Message from the Park Superintendent

Dear Friends:

We are pleased to provide you with this status report on the Glacier National Park's Going-to-the-Sun Road Project. A newsletter was nearly ready for release when the tropical storm "Pineapple Express" hit the Pacific and Inland northwest last November. Given the storm's impact on Going-to-the-Sun Road (Sun Road), we felt it necessary to update the newsletter. This issue provides the latest information concerning improvements to the Sun Road and the November 2006 storm damage repairs.

After much discussion and coordination, this May, stabilization repairs will begin to the east side of Sun Road that resulted from storm damage last November.

The National Park Service (NPS) is very proud of the Sun Road legacy. This "road out of rock" has been recognized nationally as an engineering marvel (National Engineering Landmark) and as a National Historic Landmark because of the original design and construction elements that remain today and for future generations to enjoy. The road winds through spectacular 'jaw dropping' scenery. This scenic roadway exists in large measure due to a unique working relationship between the U.S. Department of the Interior, NPS and the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) that began in the

1920's. Glacier's Sun Road serves as a model for the long-standing partnership between the agencies and has become the template for future national park road building. This interagency partnership also formed the basis for today's FHWA/NPS Park Roads and Parkways Program.

Implementation of the 2002 Sun Road Rehabilitation Plan officially got underway in September 2006, with the first shoulder season travel restrictions that allowed accelerated road work after the busy summer season was past. In keeping with our commitment to maintain 'shared use' of the entire Sun Road during the core summer season (mid-June to mid-September), accelerated work was delayed until mid-September. 'Shared use,' by both the public and road workers, will continue during summer months.

Last fall's work focused on two recent slide zones near the historic Sun Road's east tunnel. This accelerated work limited vehicle traffic within a 2.5 mile stretch between Siyeh Bend and Logan Pass. Given a lack of lead time to let travelers know about the fall work, we did our best to communicate what was happening, why it was happening and that the majority of the road remained open and accessible. During that autumn work, vehicles could access Logan Pass from the west (32 miles) and could still travel the east side of the Sun Road from St. Mary to Siyeh Bend (about 15 miles). No public access was allowed through the work zone during work periods; however, non-motorized use (hikers and bicyclists) was allowed during evening and weekend non-work periods.

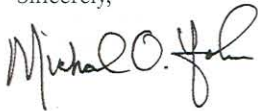
Construction of the Apgar Transit Center (ATC) remains on schedule. Glacier's west side Apgar Visitor Center will remain at its current location in Apgar Village. It will be connected by a trail to the transit hub. A second east side transit hub is planned for 2008 in the St. Mary Visitor Center.

It is our intent that the Sun Road transit system will begin in July 2007. Visitors choosing to use the optional shuttle system will be able to stop at 15 locations including several campgrounds.

After consulting with other parks with shuttle systems and gleaned some 'lessons learned,' we intend to keep the system simple. Therefore, there will be no bus passes, no tickets, and NO additional charge to ride the shuttle beyond the normal park entrance fee. The shuttle is one of many measures to help maintain visitor use, provide Sun Road access, reduce traffic congestion, and to help reduce economic impacts.

We appreciate your patience during this important rehabilitation and hope that you take advantage of the new shuttle system during a future visit to Glacier National Park!

Sincerely,



Michael O. (Mick) Holm
Superintendent

Going-to-the-Sun Road Project Update

The east side Sun Road storm damage stabilization necessary to get the Sun Road open for 2007 visitors is the park's top priority over the scheduled road rehabilitation this season. Park and FHWA managers hope to have remaining Sun Road damage repaired sufficiently for summer 2007. The goal is to have the entire road open for public use with minimal impact to the peak visitor season. The scheduled 2007 Sun Road rehabilitation between west tunnel and Haystack Creek will begin after storm damage road stabilization is completed sufficiently to allow visitor access.

Remaining Sun Road storm damage repairs are scheduled to begin in May, weather and road conditions permitting. The NPS and

FHWA plan to install a temporary two-lane bridge that will allow construction equipment across the washout near the east tunnel to access and repair damage further up the road. Once damage is stabilized sufficiently to accommodate visitor access, further storm damage repairs will be delayed until after mid-September when accelerated road work is permitted.

Once storm damage is stabilized and rehabilitation work gets underway this summer, visitors should expect only short traffic delays along the Sun Road to allow for road improvement between the west tunnel and Haystack Creek.

During the core summer season (mid-June to mid-September) there will be only short delays (several short delays totaling a maximum of 30 minutes) for a trip across

the entire 50-mile road. Before and after the summer season, contractors will have access to accelerate road work, wherein, public access will be restricted or limited through work zones.

In general, once the Sun Road is open for the season, weather and road conditions permitting, the road will remain open for two-way traffic throughout the core summer season, with scheduled short daytime traffic delays that will not exceed 30 minutes across the entire roadway and longer nighttime delays (up to four (4) hours) between 10 PM and 6 am on weeknights (see schedule below).

Summer 2007 Schedule

Daytime Schedule (Mon-Fri)
Nighttime Schedule
Weekend Schedule

Hours

6 am to 10 pm
10 pm to 6 am
6 am Fri. to 10 pm Sun.

Work Schedule

Short work zone delays totaling 30 min. maximum
Up to 4 hour delays
Short work zone delays totaling 30 min. maximum

Storms Force Cleanup, Repair To Going-to-the-Sun Road

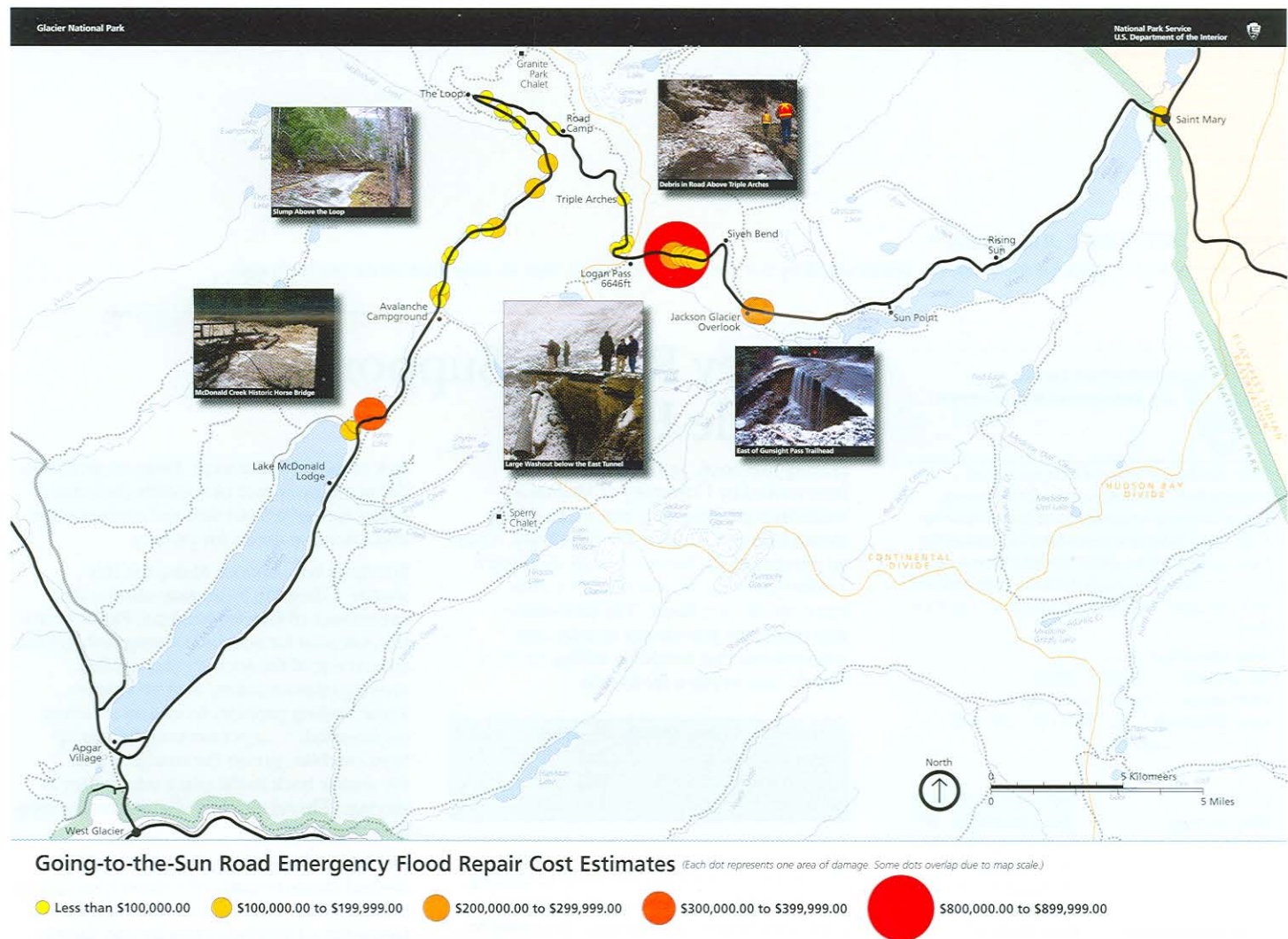
Rehabilitation work along Going-to-the-Sun (Sun) Road was halted during early November due to large storms that caused damage at numerous locations to the road. As a result, cleanup, repairs and stabilization rather than improvements, have become the park's top priority. Numerous rock and mud slides occurred from an area above Avalanche Creek to the Triple Arches area, just below Logan Pass. The Logan Creek Bridge was completely blocked by trees, debris and rocks, and a culvert and section of Sun road was washed out below the bridge. Near the Triple Arches area, a significant amount of debris clogged the road completely. On the east side, a washout of Sun Road occurred between Siyeh Bend and the east tunnel.

Damage occurred to trails and other facilities throughout the park's backcountry but the full extent of damage will not be known until snow pack melts. Some facilities that sustained damage include bridges across Upper McDonald Creek, and trails and bridges in Many Glacier, St. Mary and Two Medicine Valleys. Several structures received some flooding, including the basement level of the Mary Glacier Hotel, the ticket booth at Rising Sun Boat Dock and the historic Boat House at Two Medicine. Fortunately, flood damage to these structures was kept to a minimum and will not affect visitor services.

Over nine inches of rain was measured at Glacier's Flattop Snow Station between November 5 and November 7. Approximately 12 inches of snow had previously accumulated at the 6,300 foot elevation

level prior to the early November storm. Precipitation accumulations appear to have been heaviest near the Continental Divide in the central portion of Glacier National Park. Most lower elevation Sun Road storm damage repairs were completed last November.

At this time, repair estimates total approximately \$8 million parkwide.



New Projects at the Park

Many new and exciting improvements are taking place in and around Glacier National Park as we prepare for the introduction of transit shuttle buses within the park starting in July 2007. Here's an update on some of the efforts taking place in addition to the Apgar Transit Center:

West Entrance Station

Engineering design and development has begun on the West Entrance Station. The purpose of this project is to reduce vehicle congestion at the station and update the West Entrance station to meet current American with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. Proposed improvements to the West



Entrance Station include:

- Adding an additional traffic lane south of the entrance station potentially as far south as the headquarters entrance
- Widening the road at the entrance station to accommodate an automated entrance lane and a potential future kiosk in the same location
- Designing an appropriate lane merging and narrowing north of the entrance station
- Redesigning the southbound lane reduction at the entrance station and employee parking along the roadway
- Installing automated entrance controls
- Improving signs and striping
- Designing modifications to existing West Entrance main office / collection building and station kiosks for wheel chair accessibility

Design is expected to be completed and final construction documents issued by May 2007, with construction beginning soon thereafter.

St. Mary Visitor Center and Entrance Station

Construction of new visitor center transit system exhibits within the St. Mary Visitor Center and entrance station infrastructure is scheduled to begin in summer 2007 for completion by June 2008. Design of the new visitor center exhibits and entrance station facilities will be featured in future newsletters



Center and entrance station infrastructure is scheduled to begin in summer 2007 for

Update: Planning and Project Related Environmental Assessments

The scope and complexity of the Going-to-the-Sun (Sun) Road project is enormous; this rehabilitation and mitigation work has been described as one of the largest, if not the largest, road project in the history of the National Park Service and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The 2002 Going-to-the-Sun Road Rehabilitation Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement identified the following needs that must be addressed for the success of both the Sun Road rehabilitation and mitigation.

West Entrance Environmental Assessment:

The West Entrance Environmental Assessment (EA) analyzes proposed changes to the West Entrance Station to improve traffic flow during the summer, and to make improvements to the entrance station for accessibility, parking and improve working conditions. Public scoping was completed in January 2006; it is anticipated that the EA will be released for public review and comment in spring 2007.

St. Mary Environmental Assessment:

Preparation of the St. Mary Environmental Assessment (EA) has also been underway since public scoping was completed in January 2006. The EA is evaluating at three alternatives that address changes to the size of the parking lots and circulation around the St. Mary Visitor Center, entrance stations, and interior visitor center to update exhibits. Alternatives also include the accommodation of transit service and construction of a Native American dance

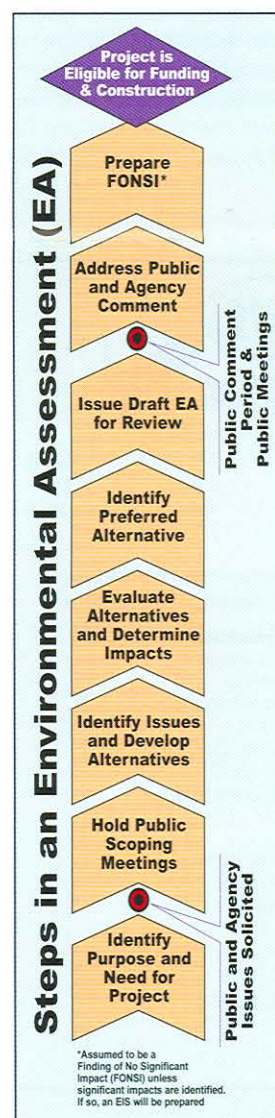
arbor adjacent to the visitor center for drumming and dancing programs. This EA will be available for public review and comment in spring 2007.

Park Headquarters Campus Plan / Transit Bus Wash Rack Environmental Assessment:

The objective Campus Plan / Transit Bus Wash Rack EA is to analyze the proposed construction of a wash rack for transit buses and other vehicles in the headquarters area in West Glacier. The study is also analyzing the proposed conversion of selected NPS residences to office space as needed over the next 15 years, identifying areas where future development may occur for park operations, and examining the impacts of a proposed museum building and structural fire garage in the vicinity of the wash rack. Public scoping was completed in August 2006 and the EA will be available for public review and comment in spring 2007.

A news release announcing the public review and comment period for each EA will be issued by the NPS. Each document will be available for review during the public comment period on the NPS website: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov>.

For more information on these EA projects, please contact Mary Riddle, Environmental Protection Specialist and Compliance Coordinator, Glacier National Park at 406-888-7898 (office) or 406-888-7904 (fax).



Spotlight:

John Schnaderbeck, Federal Highways Administration

John Schnaderbeck is the Construction Project Manager for the Going-to-the-Sun (Sun) Road Rehabilitation project. John is part of the Columbia Falls field office for the Western Federal Lands Highway Division (WFLHD) of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). His role on the project is to manage construction contracts, supervise staff inspectors and provide field oversight on multiple tasks related to the rehabilitation of the historic road. John works hand-in-hand with Jack Gordon, landscape architect for Glacier National Park, to ensure all historic roadway improvements meet aesthetic standards and to minimize the impact of construction on the park's natural resources.

Although he is new to the Glacier area, John brings 15 years worth of construction experience (four years with FHWA) to the (Sun) rehabilitation. Before joining the project, John spent three years providing project oversight and engineering on the total reconstruction of a 10-mile stretch of the Dunraven Pass Road between Canyon Village and Roosevelt Lodge in Yellowstone

National Park. A native of Chicago, John started work as a forest engineer for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM)



in Idaho and for the timber industry in challenge has been to take advantage of the nice days available to perform construction activities. Since the window of good weather for construction is limited

in Northwest Montana, John admits, "It is important to utilize decent weather and not waste days."

The interaction between different agencies and with different contractors has also been a challenging aspect of his new position. But he says that it's been a great experience to get to know all the people and their concerns, and to understand the needs of this project and area versus other places. He defines success as the ability to get things done correctly, on schedule, and "to make sure the NPS is happy with the end product."

In his spare time, you can find John exploring the park area with his wife and daughter or playing amateur baseball. Since his intention is to remain as project manager for the planned 8-10-year life of the project, it's a good bet that you may meet John on a park trail or at an area baseball field.



Throughout Montana dial 511
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Production begins on Sun Road Documentary

The National Park Service and Federal Highway Administration are producing a documentary about the Going-to-the-Sun Road rehabilitation. The 13-minute video and DVD, titled "Preserving a Landmark in the Sky," is scheduled for release in summer 2007 and features segments on the history of the original construction of the road in the late 1920s and early 1930s, as well as the planning and execution of the Sun Road rehabilitation project, including detailed information about how the project sponsors are minimizing impacts to the park and its visitors throughout the entire multi-year project.

The NPS plans to show the documentary at the St. Mary Visitor Center and distribute it to the news media, tourism and travel industries and other park stakeholders. The documentary is narrated by Peter A. Thomas, the renowned television, radio, and film voiceover narrator who's done work for such

television shows as Nova and Forensic Files. The documentary's music score is provided by Chip Davis and Mannheim Steamroller.

The project also includes a shorter 6-7-minute version of the documentary that will be made available and will also be posted on the Sun Road project website

at <http://www.nps.gov/glac>. This shorter production will provide information about the park's various transportation options, including the new voluntary shuttle bus system that will take visitors to the most popular destinations along the Sun Road.





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U.S. Department of the Interior

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Going-to-the-Sun Road News is the official National Park Service newsletter for the Going-to-the-Sun Road rehabilitation at Glacier National Park. Contributions to this publication include the National Park Service (NPS), Western Federal Lands Division / Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and contractor David Evans & Associates, Inc. (DEA) Denver, Colo.

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Survey Results Support Shuttle Use

During July 2006, 75 visitors were interviewed by University of Montana students regarding their interest in riding shuttles along Going-to-the-Sun Road. Over 70 percent of all visitors interviewed stated a willingness to take a voluntary shuttle bus over the Sun Road. The table below represents the percentage of interview respondents that would be willing to use a shuttle, and to pay a fee to ride.

Response	Free Shuttle	Five Dollar Shuttle
Yes, Likely	70.5	70.5
No, Unlikely	25.4	23.2
Don't know	4.0	6.3

The main reasons visitors gave for riding a shuttle were not having the stress of driving and the ability to get information about the park. One visitor commented, "It's easier to ride the bus than drive a car and particular to construction going on. It would be much easier, a lot less congestion."

Other reasons cited during the interviews that supported shuttle use included the freedom from driving a personal vehicle and

lack of need to rent a car. Reasons given that did not support use of a shuttle included a desire for more flexibility and convenience, and a need or desire for privacy.

For those who choose to use the free shuttle, riding the buses may change their experience of Glacier National Park; there is the potential for a more relaxing visit, greater enjoyment of the scenery and wildlife viewing opportunities, and no worries about finding parking. As one interviewee commented, "...a person could come up here and hike, get on the road and take the shuttle back to the place where they're staying. (There) wouldn't be anything wrong with that at all."

During the interview, participants noted desired characteristics of a shuttle, including the importance of comfort, interpretation, frequency of shuttles, capacity and shuttle information. Final results were received last fall. Since then park staff analyzed results and interview comments and incorporated recommendations where feasible into final implementation details for the 2007 season.